

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0327

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 8736

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAU, SF

SUBJECT: ALLEGED TRAVEL OF US GYMNASTIC TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA

1. OAU ASSISTANT SECGEN PETER ONU CONTACTED EMBASSY JULY 22 TO REQUEST CLARIFICATION OF REUTERS REPORT THAT A "US GYMNASTIC TEAM" WOULD TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA IMMEDIATELY AFTER MONTREAL OLYMPICS. TEAM REPORTEDLY CONSISTS OF KATHY HOWARD, DIANE DUNBAR, ANN CARR, JANICE BAKER, CATHY JOHNSON AND JENNY BEADEL.

2. ONU SAID THAT MANY AFRICAN STATES AND THE OAU FELT THAT THE REPORTED TRAVEL WAS AN INSULT TO AFRICA AND THE OAU, ESPECIALLY COMING HARD ON THE HEELS OF OAU DENUNCIATION OF SPORTS LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND GENERAL AFRICAN NON-PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPICS BECAUSE OF NEW ZEALAND'S SPORTS ACTIVITIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

3. EMBOFF EXPLAINED THAT IF THE TEAM WAS TRAVELING AS INDIVIDUALS TO SOUTH AFRICA, THERE WAS LITTLE THE USG COULD DO TO PREVENT IT. HE RECALLED ARTHUR ASHE'S INTER-RACIAL TENNIS MATCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA AS A DEMONSTRATION OF ASHE'S BELIEF IN BROTHERHOOD.

4. ONU AGREED BUT ASKED EMBASSY TO TRY TO OBTAIN CLARI-
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FICATION OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS: ARE THE GYMNASTS

TRAVELING AS AN OFFICIAL US-SPONSORED TEAM OR AS INDIVI-
DUALS? WILL THEY, LIKE ARTHUR ASHE, COMPETE AGAINST
INTERRACIAL GROUPS OR AGAINST WHITES ONLY? FOR OUR
INFORMATION, WHAT IS THE RACIAL MAKEUP OF THE GYMNASTIC
TEAM?
TIENKEN

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